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Olympia, WA 98504-0600

2014 Legislative Review

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State Representatives Joel Kretz & Shelly Short

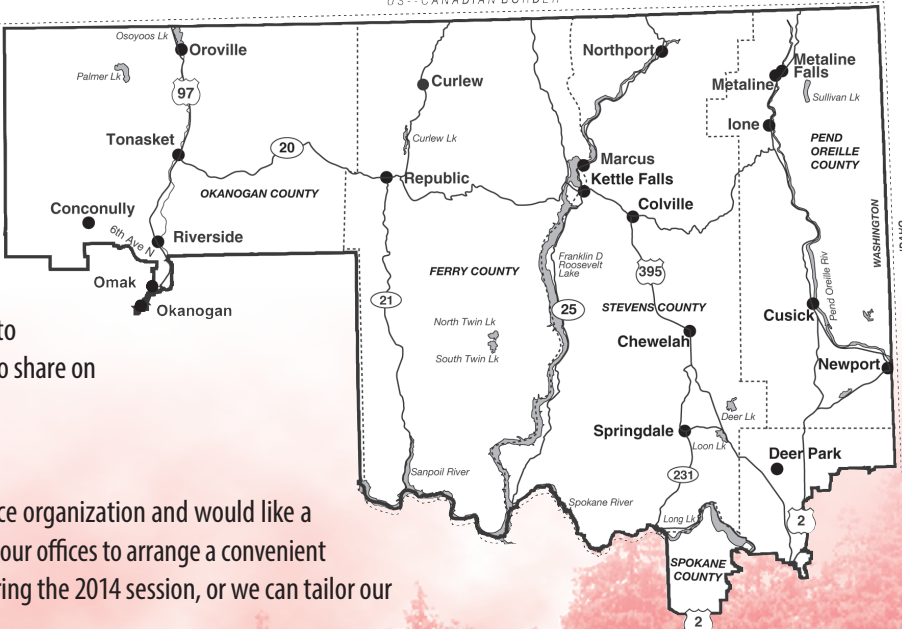
ELECTION-YEAR RESTRICTIONS

We want you to know what is happening in Olympia, and how it affects you. However, this is an election year, and under the provisions of a 1992 law (created by Initiative 134) there are limits on what and when we can mail to you. After this newsletter, the soonest we can mail another is just before the 2015 session.

The initiative does permit us to respond to your direct requests for information, and we encourage you to write or call whenever you have a question or a comment to share on legislation or other matters.

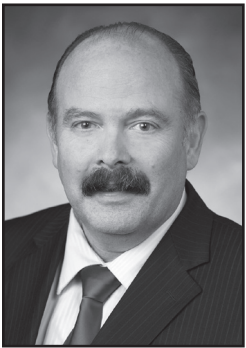
NEED A GUEST SPEAKER?

If you belong to a club, civic group or community-service organization and would like a guest speaker at your next meeting or event, please contact our offices to arrange a convenient date. We're happy to report on the issues we dealt with during the 2014 session, or we can tailor our remarks to address particular areas of interest or concern.



7th DISTRICT

STATE REPRESENTATIVES
Joel Kretz & Shelly Short
7th Legislative District Report



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Deputy Leader

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• Technology & Economic Development (Assistant Ranking Republican)

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

For the first time since 2009, the state Legislature adjourned on time (March 13) with no plans for a special session. This year, we held the line on tax increases, kept the state budget in balance, and held in-state tuition rates at the state-run colleges and universities steady for another year.

This newsletter will serve to inform you about some of the issues we dealt with in Olympia on your behalf. If you have questions or other concerns to share with us, please call, send an e-mail or write a letter using the contact information and our legislative website addresses on this page.

We look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely,

Joel Kretz

Rep. Joel Kretz
7th Legislative District

Shelly Short

Rep. Shelly Short
7th Legislative District

TOLL-FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE:
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HEARING-IMPAIRED HOTLINE:
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INSIDE:

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- Holding the line on taxes ...including the gas tax
- Making education a priority
- Gov. Inslee ignores victims' families with unilateral death-penalty moratorium
- Small county Growth Management Act reform
- Protecting school funding
- Holding state agencies accountable
- Fighting for ratepayers
- Helping the local "handyman"



State Representatives Joel Kretz & Shelly Short

LEGISLATURE PASSES TRUE SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET



The final bipartisan budget agreement was the first truly *supplemental* budget we've seen in years and one of the only budgets we've ever supported. The supplemental budget is NOT a time to rewrite the entire budget. It is specifically for addressing unforeseen circumstances in caseloads or revenue collections so that our budget remains balanced throughout the two-year biennium.

The 2014 supplemental budget increased spending by less than 0.23 percent, mostly for maintenance issues. But one of the most important aspects about the budget is that it is balanced out for four years. This is a new requirement and will help avoid the "budget roller coaster" of the past. This four-year budget requirement is a huge protection for taxpayers and helps prevent overspending. This is something we've proposed for years and we're glad to see it finally adopted into law.

HOLDING THE LINE ON TAXES...

Many in Olympia continue to believe more government spending is the answer, no matter the question. Legislation from Democrats in both the House and Senate would have raised taxes on e-cigs (vaping), bottled water, prescription drugs, out-of-state residents and fuel refineries. However, we know you have had to do more with less and believe state government should do the same. We worked to defeat these tax increases so that state government continues to live within its means.

...INCLUDING THE GAS TAX

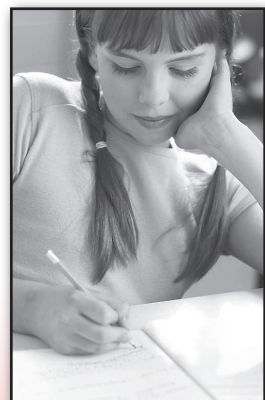


There was also a big push to raise the gas tax this year by up to 11.5 cents per gallon. However, the transportation budget continues to be hugely political and seems to be run by downtown Seattle environmentalists. In one version of the project list there were about a billion dollars' worth of bike and pedestrian paths while the 7th District got two wildlife overpasses. It is very difficult for us to envision asking our folks at home, where the median income is between \$25-35,000 to pay more so that Google, Microsoft and Boeing workers in Bellevue and Seattle can have another bike path, walking trail or transit line.

Besides, without serious reforms, we cannot support throwing more good money away to a transportation-construction system and a Washington State Department of Transportation that lacks accountability, transparency and a proven track record of on-time and on-budget success.

We supported reforms to make transportation projects less costly, such as: keeping sales-tax revenues collected from transportation projects in the transportation budget; reducing unnecessary regulations that drive up costs; and keeping government-contracted wages under control through prevailing-wage reform.

MAKING EDUCATION A PRIORITY



In contrast to the past 30 years, the focus in Olympia is now on prioritizing education in the state budget. We did so last year, and this year's supplemental budget continues that progress. However, like you, we know that money alone will not solve all of our state's education problems.

GOV. INSLEE IGNORES VICTIMS' FAMILIES WITH UNILATERAL DEATH-PENALTY MORATORIUM



All nine men on Washington's death row committed heinous murders, and their victims include women or small children. So when Gov. Inslee placed a moratorium on the death penalty by executive order, it caught law enforcement, prosecutors, lawmakers and victims' advocates

by surprise.

Regardless of how one feels about the death penalty, capital punishment is the law in our state. If the governor wants to change the law, he should work through the legislative process — allowing public involvement. We feel it was insensitive to announce such a decision without even consulting with most of the victims' families.

SMALL COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT REFORM



Legislation Rep. Kretz worked on again this year takes critical steps to help relieve local governments in small counties, such as Ferry County, that opted into Growth Management Act (GMA) planning to opt out. This change would

save local governments the high cost of defending against litigation by environmental groups and the general costs of complying with the burdensome work of the GMA planning.

Ferry County opted in to GMA planning, which has led to ongoing litigation ever since. Small counties simply cannot absorb the cost of neither the planning, nor the attorneys needed to defend against predatory environmental groups.

We are pleased that our county commissioners worked alongside the Legislature to help pass Kretz's House Bill 1224. The fact is, the population of Ferry County was 7,000 in 1900 and it's still 7,000 today. Planning for the eventual urban sprawl in Ferry County is clearly unnecessary.

As signed into law, the bill will allow four of the smallest counties (including Pend Oreille) that originally opted-in to the GMA planning scheme to opt out if the commissioners choose to do so. While this bill was a great start to addressing this issue, we must continue to build on efforts like this that help our most rural counties in the state.

PROTECTING SCHOOL FUNDING

More than 21 percent of Washington is federal forest land that allows for timber harvesting to fund roads and, more importantly, schools. House Bill 2207, which Rep. Kretz worked tirelessly on, protects education funding in districts with federal forest lands.

This bill, which was signed into law, ensures the dollars generated on these federal lands continue to be apportioned to school districts to help offset the lack of property tax on the lands. Our rural counties, most of which are comprised of large swatches of untaxed state and federal land, must have alternative ways, such as timber harvesting, to pay for schools.

HOLDING STATE AGENCIES ACCOUNTABLE

Under legislation sponsored by Rep. Short and signed into law by the governor, certain state agencies are now required to make public the sources of scientific information relied upon in support of significant actions. The two bills (HB 2261 and HB 2262) build upon her efforts from last year to increase government accountability and transparency and require the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Department of Ecology (DOE) to "show their work" by categorizing on their websites the sources of information relied upon in support of significant agency actions.

By listing out specific categories of information, the public, legislators and the media will be able to see what information is relied upon more heavily and what information is absent the decision-making process altogether. It will allow the impacted communities, citizens and local governments to fact-check the agencies and help hold them accountable. Eventually, I want to hold ALL state agencies to this level of accountability and transparency.

FIGHTING FOR RATEPAYERS



Rep. Short sponsored legislation (**HB 2112**) this year that would help prevent Washington ratepayers from paying twice for "clean energy." Her bill would have allowed some incremental electricity produced by efficiency improvements to *federal* hydro projects (like Grand Coulee) to qualify as an eligible renewable resource. It is our belief that the millions of Washingtonians who have already paid for these efficiency improvements to federal hydro projects should be able to see the benefits of

those improvements. Unfortunately, this legislation did not pass the Legislature. However, we will continue to work on common-sense energy solutions that protect our ratepayers in future sessions.

HELPING THE LOCAL "HANDYMAN"



Rep. Short also sponsored **HB 2113**, which would modify the exemption from contractor registration requirements for work that is casual, minor, or inconsequential. Current law assumes that a "handyman" who advertises is presumed to be a contractor subject to the Department of Labor and Industries' (L&I) subjective interpretation, which has been targeting these individuals. Her bill raises the threshold to \$1,200 per job (supplies and labor) and most importantly assumes handymen are NOT contractors. This way, L&I cannot subjectively go after these folks unless an individual falsely states

he or she is a contractor. While this legislation did not pass, we continue to believe folks who have skills ought to be able to support their families without fear of L&I coming after them and will work on this proposal again next session.